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14 March 1959

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CENTRAL

INTELLIGENCE

BULLETIN



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DAILY BRIEF

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

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USSR: [There is continuing speculation among foreign diplomats in Moscow that First Deputy Premier Mikoyan may replace Gromyko as foreign minister. Khrushchev may desire to have a more authoritative spokesman at a conference of foreign ministers. Mikoyan's international stature was considerably enhanced by his visit to the United States and he has recently been making more frequent pronouncements on foreign policy; thus, such a shift would be logical.]

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

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Tunisia: President Bourguiba appears to feel more and more isolated and increasingly subject to pressure from Algerian rebels within Tunisia. Rebel soldiers are becoming more cocky, while Soviet-bloc contributions to the more than 90,000 Algerian refugees inside Tunisia, heretofore channeled through the Tunisian Red Crescent, now are delivered directly to the Algerian Red Crescent in Tunisia.

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Japan-Korea: Prime Minister Kishi indicated to Ambassador MacArthur on 11 March that it might be possible to shelve indefinitely the plan to repatriate Koreans to North Korea if South Korea could be persuaded to accept a "reasonable solution" of the "Rhee Line" issue and the return of detained Japanese fishermen. Kishi would rather settle these issues in direct negotiations with South Korea than submit them to the UN or to engage in direct negotiations with North Korea. Seoul, however, has shown no willingness to compromise on the fisheries issue.

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NO

*Bolivia: The US Embassy is going ahead with unobtrusive evacuation of nonessential US citizens because of spreading strikes and growing public tension over financial policy. On 13 March the Government said it was incorporating into a decree a proposal of the International Monetary Fund, strongly opposed by the politically powerful armed miners. [redacted]

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Cuba: Disillusionment with the Castro regime seems to be spreading. Castro's position as arbiter of all official actions and policies hinders efficient functioning of the government, and his preoccupation with certain projects, such as social and agrarian reform, is delaying economic recovery. He has alienated certain commercial, professional, and political groups, including some of his former supporters, but his popularity with the lower classes is apparently undiminished. [redacted]

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

Tunisian President Pessimistic Over North African Situation

President Bourguiba is becoming increasingly pessimistic concerning the North African situation, particularly prospects for a settlement in Algeria. This attitude may stem from lessened Tunisian control over the activities of Algerian rebels in Tunisia, as well as Bourguiba's growing diplomatic isolation. The rebels now are operating more openly than in the past, and this may cause a new crisis in Tunisia's relations with France.

Rebel troops seem to be growing more cocky and now are seen on the streets of western Tunisian cities in uniform. An earlier decision that the Tunisian rather than the Algerian Red Crescent was to receive all relief supplies destined for the 90,000 Algerian refugees in Tunisia is being circumvented. A 37-ton shipment from the Rumanian Red Cross was delivered in January to the Algerian Red Crescent, and Algerian Red Crescent and trade-union officials apparently will take delivery of shipments from Czechoslovakia and from Soviet trade unions soon to arrive.

Having made repeated but fruitless bids last month for a meeting with De Gaulle to discuss an Algerian solution, Bourguiba now is telling news correspondents that his government cannot withstand the general drift toward Communism which he fears will occur in North Africa unless the Algerian question is resolved. While this line may in part be "psychological warfare," Bourguiba's relations with France are growing more difficult, and he is already isolated from the United Arab Republic--with which he has competed for maximum influence among the Algerian rebels. Even cooperation with Morocco seems to be slipping; Bourguiba is, in fact, peculiarly sensitive to the possibility that Moroccan relations with France may improve while Tunisia's relations deteriorate.

In the view of the American ambassador in Tunis, Bourguiba is "stuck with the Algerians," and the Algerians, particularly those in rebel military circles, view him with no great esteem in spite of the Tunisian facilities they enjoy. [redacted]

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[redacted]
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Japan May Shelve Plans to Repatriate Koreans to North Korea

[Japanese Prime Minister Kishi told Ambassador MacArthur on 11 March that he thinks it is possible to find some formula for indefinite shelving of the plan to repatriate Korean residents in Japan who desire to go to North Korea. This would be contingent on South Korean willingness to accept a reasonable solution on the questions of the "Rhee Line" and the return of detained Japanese fishermen. Kishi said he would rather settle all issues with Seoul by direct negotiations than submit them to the United Nations, as demanded by some conservative party leaders and other elements in Japan.]

[South Korea continues to demand that Japan unconditionally drop the repatriation plan. President Rhee probably views the worsening of relations with Japan as a welcome opportunity to divert both domestic and foreign attention from an internal political crisis and has shown no willingness to compromise on the fishing line. However, he might agree to renew negotiations with Japan in view of the threat of UN action.]

[The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) plans to take no action on the Japanese request to screen Korean residents for possible repatriation unless the Red Cross societies of both Japan and North Korea ask that it be carried out under ICRC auspices. Pyongyang opposes any screening, probably fearing that its claim that 100,000 Koreans desire repatriation to North Korea is greatly exaggerated; however, it may be willing to send a Red Cross delegation to Geneva to discuss the question.]

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[redacted]

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[redacted]

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Bolivian Financial Crisis May Cause Anti-American Violence

The US Embassy is going ahead with unobtrusive evacuation of nonessential US citizens in Bolivia because of spreading strikes and growing public tension over financial policy. On 13 March the Government said it was incorporating into a decree a proposal of the International Monetary Fund for settling a hotly contested wage question in the tin mines. Bolivian President Siles had said his government was unable to impose this recommendation on the armed Bolivian miners. The IMF had insisted that its recommendation on mine wages be accepted as a condition for continuing financial aid. Bolivia's foreign-exchange position of minus \$2,300,000 on 12 March threatened a shutdown of the Central Bank.

The tin miners' strike protesting the proposed wage decision entered its second week on 12 March, and sympathy strikes have spread through the country.

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[redacted]
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New Signs of Disillusionment With Castro Government

Signs of disillusionment with the Castro government are increasing, and, [redacted]

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[redacted] the seeds of counterrevolution are being sown. The government has been slow to attack the many economic, political, and social problems the revolution promised to correct, and Prime Minister Fidel Castro's position as sole arbiter of official policies and actions is a continuing deterrent to efficient government.

Castro's preoccupation with agrarian and social reform has kept the government from taking more direct steps toward economic recovery. Certain moves by the new government, such as lowering rents and cutting utility rates, have been designed to appeal to the lower classes without regard for the effect on the economic structure.

The "war crimes trials," which have lowered Castro's prestige abroad, now are being criticized in Cuba, particularly following the retrial and sentencing to long prison terms of several air force personnel originally acquitted of genocide. Castro's decision, announced on 12 March, to extend the death penalty to persons guilty of misusing public funds will cause further speculation that he is more interested in revenge than in justice.

Opposition to Castro is undoubtedly developing among commercial and political groups, although he probably retains his great popularity among the lower classes. [redacted]

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